AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) A backlight unit for illuminating an object to be illuminated provided with at least two directional brightness gradients using a plurality of light sources disposed directly below the object to be illuminated, wherein the backlight unit has a reflection portion for causing the light from the plurality of light sources to exit toward a certain direction, wherein the reflection portion comprises at least a first and a second reflection layers having a predetermined level of light reflectance and transmittance, wherein the reflection portion consists of a first region with the first and second reflection layers being overlapped in the incident direction of light located at a position equivalent to the central portion of the object to be illuminated and a second region consisting of the first reflection layer only, and wherein the brightness gradient is formed in the horizontal and vertical directions of the object to be illuminated by controlling reflectance of the reflection portion using the first region with relatively higher reflectance and the second region with lower reflectance than the first region.

9. (Currently Amended) A backlight unit for illuminating an object to be illuminated provided with at least two directional brightness gradients using a plurality of light sources disposed directly below the object to be illuminated, wherein the backlight unit has a reflection portion for causing the light from the plurality of light sources to exit toward a certain direction, wherein the reflection portion comprises at least a first and a second reflection layers having a predetermined level of light reflectance and transmittance, wherein the reflection portion consists of a first region with the first and second reflection layers being overlapped in the incident

direction of light located at a position equivalent to the central portion in the horizontal direction on the surface to be illuminated , and a second region consisting of the first reflection layer only located at both ends, and wherein the brightness gradient is formed in the horizontal and vertical directions on the surface to be illuminated by controlling reflectance of the reflection portion in the horizontal direction on the surface to be illuminated and also by making the brightness of the light sources located at the position equivalent to the central portion in the vertical direction on the surface to be illuminated relatively higher than the brightness of the light sources located at both ends, using the first region with relatively higher reflectance and the second region with lower reflectance than the first region.

10. (Currently amended) A backlight unit for illuminating an object to be illuminated provided with at least two directional brightness gradients using a plurality of light sources disposed directly below the object to be illuminated, wherein the backlight unit has a reflection portion for causing the light from the plurality of light sources to exit toward a certain direction, wherein the reflection portion comprises at least a first and a second reflection layers having a predetermined level of light reflectance and transmittance, wherein the reflection portion consists of a first region with the first and second reflection layers overlapped in the incident direction of light located at a position equivalent to the central portion in the vertical direction on the surface of the object to be illuminated and a second region consisting of the first reflection layer only located at the both ends, and wherein a brightness gradient is formed in the horizontal and vertical directions on the surface of the object to be illuminated by controlling reflectance of the reflection portion in the vertical direction on the surface to be illuminated and also by making the brightness of the light sources located at the position equivalent to the central portion in the

horizontal direction on the surface to be illuminated relatively higher than the brightness of the light sources located at both ends, using the first region with relatively higher reflectance and the second region with lower reflectance than the first region.

11-28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) A backlight unit for illuminating an object to be illuminated provided with at least two directional brightness gradients using a plurality of light sources disposed directly below the object to be illuminated, wherein the backlight unit has a reflection portion for causing the light from the plurality of light sources to exit toward a certain direction, wherein the reflection portion comprises at least a first and a second reflection layers having a predetermined level of light reflectance and transmittance, wherein the reflection portion consists of a first region with the first and second reflection layers being overlapped in the incident direction of light located at a position equivalent to the central portion in the horizontal direction on the surface of the object to be illuminated, and a second region consisting of the first reflection layer only located at both ends, and wherein a brightness gradient is formed in the horizontal and vertical directions on the surface of the object to be illuminated by controlling reflectance of the reflection portion in the horizontal direction on the surface to be illuminated and also by making the clearance of the light sources located at the position equivalent to the central portion in the vertical direction on the surface to be illuminated relatively smaller than the clearance of the light sources located at both ends, using the first region with relatively higher reflectance and the second region with lower reflectance than the first region.

30. (Currently Amended) A backlight unit for illuminating an object to be illuminated provided with at least two directional brightness gradients using a plurality of light sources disposed directly below the object to be illuminated, wherein the backlight unit has a reflection portion for causing the light from the plurality of light sources to exit toward a certain direction, wherein the reflection portion comprises at least a first and a second reflection layers having a predetermined level of light reflectance and transmittance, wherein the reflection portion consists of a first region with the first and second reflection layers overlapped in the incident direction of light located at a position equivalent to the central portion in the vertical direction on the surface of the object to be illuminated and a second region consisting of the first reflection layer only located at the both ends, and wherein the brightness gradient is formed in the horizontal and vertical directions on the surface of the object to be illuminated by controlling reflectance of the reflection portion in the vertical direction on the surface to be illuminated and also by making the clearance of the light sources located at the position equivalent to the central portion in the horizontal direction on the surface to be illuminated relatively smaller than the clearance of the light sources located at both ends, using the first region with relatively higher reflectance and the second region with lower reflectance than the first region.

31. (Previously Presented) A liquid crystal display device comprising the backlight unit of claim 8 and a liquid crystal panel to be illuminated by the backlight unit.

32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously Presented) A liquid crystal display device comprising the backlight unit of claim 9 and a liquid crystal panel to be illuminated by the backlight unit.

34. (Previously Presented) A liquid crystal display device comprising the backlight unit of claim 10 and a liquid crystal panel to be illuminated by the backlight unit.

35. (Previously Presented) A liquid crystal display device comprising the backlight unit of claim 29 and a liquid crystal panel to be illuminated by the backlight unit.

36. (Previously Presented) A liquid crystal display device comprising the backlight unit of claim 30 and a liquid crystal panel to be illuminated by the backlight unit.

37. (Currently Amended) A backlight unit providing at least two directional brightness gradients comprising:

a plurality of straight tube fluorescent lamps disposed parallel to each other and directly below an object to be illuminated; and

a reflection portion for causing the light from the plurality of fluorescent lamps to exit toward a certain direction, wherein

the backlight unit makes the brightness of the fluorescent lamps located at the position corresponding to the central portion of the object to be illuminated relatively higher than the brightness of the fluorescent lamps located at both ends, or makes the clearance between the fluorescent lamps located at the position corresponding to the central portion of the object to be illuminated relatively smaller than the clearance between the fluorescent lamps located at both ends, and the backlight unit at least controls reflectance of the reflection portion in the direction parallel with the longitudinal direction of the plurality of fluorescent lamps.

38. (Previously Presented) The backlight unit of claim 37, wherein the longitudinal direction of the plurality of fluorescent lamps is approximately parallel to the horizontal direction of the object to be illuminated.